



Communicator

February 2013

DXpeditions

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and Much More!



The Communicator



**SURREY
AMATEUR RADIO CLUB**

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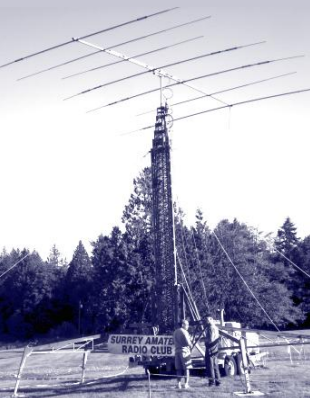
Hui Yee ve7yxx

VIA THE WEB

www.ve7sar.net

The SARC Communicator is published monthly for members of the Surrey Amateur Radio Club.

SARC maintains a website at www.ve7sar.net that includes club history, meetings, news and other information.



Monthly Meeting Minutes

Introduction

The meeting was brought to order at 1905 hr by President John Brodie VA7XB.

Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Scott Hawrelak VE7HA gave a financial report, indicating that the net cost to SARC of the Christmas party was \$440. During December, \$593 was spent on club liability insurance and \$267 for ICBC insurance on the big tower/trailer. John VA7XB indicated that the Gaming account balance (\$127) will be depleted by purchase of a battery for repeater power backup, with the balance of the cost coming from the regular account.

Christmas Party Report

Jinty Reid VA7JMR reported that 45 members and guests attended the Christmas party. As a result of concerns expressed about noise and steep stairs at the ABC, the Eaglequest Coyote Creek Golf Club on 152nd St. has

been reserved for Dec. 7, 2013, for which we were required to pay a \$500 deposit.

Membership

Bill Little VA7ZBL reported that 61 members are in good standing, and the remainder will be notified that they are to be removed from the roster. He also indicated that a hard copy of the membership list will be available to members on request in future. Bill VA7ZBL offered to prepare a new meeting signup sheet which includes contact information.

SEPARS Report

Kelvin Hall VA7KPH reported that SEPARS will be holding training programs in the first few months of 2013 on use of the ICOM IC-2820H and the Kenwood TS-480 radios used in the Grab & Go kits.

Field Day Planning

Brett VE7GM stated that this year we are making some changes to improve our score. These include:

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	SEPARS Net	SARC Net
1 st Tuesday	Drew VA7DRW Jay VE7OFH Standby	Drew VA7DRW
2 nd Tuesday	Dixie VA7DIX Alan VA7BIT Standby	Jinty VA7JMR
3 rd Tuesday	Rob VE7CZV	Anton VE7SSD
4 th Tuesday	Peter VE7PGX Dixie VA7DIX Standby	John VA7XB
5 th Tuesday	Jinty VA7JMR	Bill VE7XS
Want a turn at Net Control? Contact the SARC Net Manager ve7ti @ separs.net		

CLUB EXECUTIVE 2013-2013

PRESIDENT

John Brodie VA7XB

VICE PRESIDENT

Brett Garrett VE7GM

SECRETARY

Vacant

TREASURER

Scott Hawrelak VE7HA

DIRECTORS

Kelvin Hall VA7KPH
(SEPARS)

John Schouten VE7TI
(Communicator Editor
& Net Manager)

George Merchant
VE7QH (Repeaters)

Bill Little VA7ZBL
(Membership)

Bill Gipps VE7XS

Rob Gilchrist VE7CZV

SARC hosts an Amateur Radio net each Tuesday evening at 8 PM. Please tune in to the VE7RSC repeater at 147.360 MHz (+600 KHz) Tone=110.9, (optional Tone Squelch 110.9) also accessible on IRLP node 1980 and Echo-link node 496228. On UHF we operate a repeater on 443.775MHz (+5Mhz) Tone=110.9 Coming soon, a repeater at 224.000MHz (-1.6MHz).

- a) Earlier start date for planning and preparations
- b) Increased number of hours used for running, especially with CW and digital
- c) Improved strategic operations on all shifts with increased Station Manager training
- d) Stronger focus on bonus points
- e) We will run a GOTA station only if we are sure we can bring out enough newly licensed hams and unlicensed people (especially youths) to keep it busy and get the points we need to justify the effort (e.g. we need 500 QSOs).
- f) Possible improvements to the SEPAR HF radios (Kenwood TS-480s) and training of FD operators with the radios prior to FD.
- g) EMI noise filtering on all generators
- h) Simplified beam antenna on the large tower
- i) A dry run exercise in May to work out any unresolved issues

Brett requested that members interested in being part of FD preparations should put their name forward immediately. John VA7XB informed the group that award of an \$825 Community grant from the City of Surrey had been confirmed for our 2013 Field Day event.

Repeater

John VA7XB gave a repeater report in the absence of Director George Merchant VE7QH. He noted that concerns about corrosion on the equipment require investigation, as the cause is not known. Also, as noted above, a battery is to be installed for 12 volt power backup, and the need for a UPS for 110 v equipment reviewed. These matters plus the status of the former repeater site and an MOU which describes mutual rights and obligations of SARC and the City, are to be the subject of a meeting with Surrey Fire within the next few weeks.

Operator Training Program

Brett VE7GM reviewed the status of the operator training program.

In December several members participated in the RAC Winter Contest at Fred VE7IO's using the VE7RAC call sign. Thanks to Fred for the use of his station, and Bill Gipps for permitting use of the official RAC call.

The January training event was held last weekend, during the ARRL RTTY Roundup at John VA7XB's station. It appears that we will have more RTTY operators for Field Day this year, important because each RTTY and CW phone contact is worth as many points as two phone contacts.

On Saturday, February 2nd the 2013 BC QSO Party presents a made-in-BC opportunity for BC hams to be sought-after on the air. The action starts at 8 am local time and runs for 12 hours. Even contest newbies can have fun in this one. Hams all over North America and even DX will be making a special effort to contact BC hams, so members with HF capability at home or who are with the Op Training program should mark this day on their calendars. This year, SARC and SEPAR have teamed up to sponsor a plaque for the "Most BC federal electoral districts worked".

On February 9-10 the CQ Worldwide WPX RTTY contest will be hosted by John VA7XB. This is another opportunity for RTTY training, so interested members should mark this weekend on their calendars.

February Meeting

Heinz Buhrig VA7AQ will talk about his Alaska DXpedition, followed by an in-house swap meet. This is an opportunity for members to get rid of unwanted items and to obtain some bargains.

Featured Presentation

After a coffee break, John MacFarlane VE7AXU gave an informative talk titled "Introduction to Digital Ham Operations - an Overview Mainly for Beginners". In reviewing the essential features of various digital modes, John was assisted by Brett Garrett VE7GM, who displayed the waterfall appearance of various digital modes, and played the relevant sounds. The presentation stimulated some excellent discussion on digital and related topics, and members went away with plenty of new ideas to try. During the discussion, it was suggested that SARC endeavour to participate in a PSK contest. (note: the presentation will be on www.ve7sar.net shortly)

The meeting was adjourned at 2110

~ John VA7XB

DOWN THE LOG...

SARC Monthly Meetings

2nd Wednesday (Sept-Jun)
1900 hrs local at the Emergency Management BC PREOC,
14275 96th Avenue, Surrey, BC

Weekly Club Breakfast

Friday at 0800 local
ABC Country Restaurant at
600 - 7380 King George Blvd.
Surrey

SARC Net

Tuesday at 2000 hrs local
on 147.360 MHz (+) Tone=110.9

SEPARS Net

Tuesday at 19:30 hrs local
on 147.360 MHz (+) Tone=110.9

Announcements & News

SEPARS Monthly Workshop
Third Thursday, 1900-2130 local
Rm. 214, 13569 - 76th Avenue,
Surrey.

SEPARS Training

Fourth Saturday, 0830 local,
Firehall #1, 88 & 132nd Street,
Surrey

On the Web

ve7sar.net

Between newsletters, watch your e-mail for announcements of events, monthly meetings and training opportunities. These announcements can also be found on our web page, or via:

Twitter

[@ve7sar](https://twitter.com/ve7sar)

Photos
Web Albums

Next Meeting: About DX-peditions



A DX-pedition is an expedition to what is considered an exotic place by amateur radio operators, perhaps because of its remoteness, access restrictions or simply because there are very few radio amateurs active from that place. This could be an island, a country, or even a particular spot on a geographical grid. DX is a telegraphic shorthand for "distance" or "distant".

Early DX-peditions were simply exploratory and geographical expeditions in the late 1920s and 1930s, in which one or more radio amateurs participated in order to provide long distance communications. At the same time they communicated with fellow radio amateurs who wanted to contact a new country. Most notable are the Antarctic expeditions of Admiral Byrd. Another example is the voyage of the schooner *Kaimiloa*, which traveled the South Pacific in 1924. While the ship's wealthy owners enjoyed the islands, an amateur radio operator kept contact with, and sent QSL cards to, experimenters in the United States.

The participation of radio amateurs in geographical expeditions was resumed after World War II, e.g. the participation of Bob Leo, W6PBV, in the Gatti-Hallicrafters expedition in Africa of 1948. The most unusual expedition to place reliance on amateur radio for communications was that of Kon-Tiki organized by Thor Heyerdahl in 1947 and using call sign LI2B.

The activity of dedicated DX-peditions was pioneered by one-time ARRL president Robert W. Denniston, W0DX. Mr. Denniston's 1948 DX-pedition, using call sign VP7NG, was to the Bahamas and was called "Gon-Waki" ala Thor Heyerdahl's "Kon-Tiki" expedition the previous year.

An "entity" for radio award purposes is any location that is either politically or physically remote (or both) from other jurisdictions/locations. For example, even though Alaska and Hawaii are politically part of the United States, they are separate DX entities (physically separate). Small countries, even ones surrounded by larger ones, such as the Vatican, count. Other entities include transnational

organizations such as the International Telecommunications Union, and the United Nations. These are within their host countries but have distinct ITU prefixes. Finally, a few areas of historic or special status have been included, such as Sardinia, the Sovereign Military Order of Malta, Antarctica, and Western Sahara.

Some locations are rare due to their extreme inaccessibility - examples include Peter Island, Clipperton Island, Navassa Island, or Desecheo Island. When amateurs travel to remote locations such as these they must first obtain permission to operate from that location from whatever political jurisdiction rules the area they wish to travel to. Even in countries such as the United States, this permission can be difficult to obtain.

Once operating permission is assured, then transportation must be arranged. This can be both expensive and dangerous. Some locations are coral atolls that almost submerged at high tide, such as Scarborough Reef; others are sub-polar islands with inhospitable climates such as Peter Island. The amateur must also take care of the basic necessities such as food, water, and power.

In addition to licensing and survival issues, DX-pedition participants devote much attention to the radio equipment they use.

In October 2011, the T32C Kiritimati (Christmas Island, Eastern Kiribati) DXpedition, run by the Five Star DXers Association, claimed 213,169 contacts. This broke the February 2008 record set by the Ducie Island (Pitcairn group) DXpedition, which claimed 183,686 QSOs under the callsign VP6DX. This in turn had broken the previous record of 168,000 set in 2001 by D68C (also by the FSDXA) from the Galawa Beach Hotel on the Comoros island of Grande Comore. The January 2012 trip to Malpelo Island netted 195,625 contacts. While not an absolute record, it was the largest total ever achieved by a DX-pedition where the members lived in tents and powered their radios by portable generators.

SARC member Heinz Buhrig VA7AQ, presents a slide-illustrated Alaska DXpedition talk at SARC's February 13th meeting.

This will be followed by an in-house swap meet
Bring stuff you no longer need and sell or exchange it for new stuff



Radio-Active Jinty Reid VA7JMR

Peter Gauld VE7PGX

Peter was born and raised in Bearsden close to Kimardinn Loch, near Glasgow in Scotland. He is 1 of 3 boys. His father was an engineer which meant that the family travelled throughout the world when Peter was young. Around 1979 the family lived in Cairo, Egypt for a year and although Peter was young at the time, he remembers seeing the pyramids, sphinx, camels and even learned some Arabic. Along with his family he also traveled to Spain, Holland, and Turkey.

In 1981 the family emigrated to Canada. Initially they lived in North Delta. During his high school years Peter won awards in mathematic competitions. He joined the computer and chess clubs. He participated in Gojo-ryu karate and won a medal, so watch out folks, don't cross Peter ha ha ! He later went on to study at Kwantlen College and obtained a diploma in computer science and business. He then took a job in the computer department for Fraser Burrard Hospital Society which eventually became Fraser Health. He worked for them for 15 years but now is a Consultant for Strategic Planning and Innovation which consists of managing the risk and impact of change to health care computer systems and loves this job.

While attending Kwantlen he met Ching-Lin (Christina) and in the year 2000 they were married on New Year's Eve in Taiwan which is where Christina originates from. They moved into a "wee house" in Cloverdale and had 2 "naughty children", Peter lovingly states. His 2 sons are Andrew 11 and Arran 8. Christina works as a fitness instructor for the City of Surrey. Peter describes himself as always interested in helping people and this led him to getting his first aid ticket and in taking emergency management courses at the Justice Institute. He is now studying for his degree in Emergency Management at the Justice Institute. He also enjoys hiking and camping with his family.

Through some co-workers, Paul VA7VX and Earl VE7QJ he became interested in ham radio and studied and challenged the Basic Exam (I just found the exam challenging!) and passed with honours in 2012. He then joined SARC and SEPAR. He has 2 radios. One is a hand held radio, a Yaesu VX-7R, and the other one in his car and is a Yaesu FT-2900. He thoroughly enjoys ham radio

activities such as acting as Net Control, EOC Exercises with the City of Surrey and the Festival of Lights Parade in New Westminster. His vision for the future is to hopefully obtain a paid job for Emergency Planning with the City of Surrey.

Peter has a great sense of humour. He has great voice tone and clarity on the radio. He really takes emergency preparedness seriously and the trunk of his vehicle is set up as a perfect example of emergency supplies as the pictures below demonstrate.





The Contest Contender

Fred Orsetti VE7IO

The RAC Winter Contest 2012

We all had a great time in the RAC Winter contest with some good runs on both SSB and CW. We were given the use of the call VE7RAC and operated from VE7IO's station. Having the bonus point call was a definite advantage as we experienced some nice pile-ups keeping the ops busy.

One glitch occurred on Saturday morning when I took over operation from the overnight SSB op and changed to 20 meter CW. Repeated CQ's did not produce any response, very unusual considering the VE7RAC call, then a posting appeared on the DX cluster saying "VE7RAC rx problem?" and this got my attention. It turned out to be PBT way out of adjustment from the previous op operating phone. A re-adjustment of the PBT to normal settings made the entire 20 meter band come alive. It turned out that John VA7XB had sent me an email that many stations were calling but we were not responding too bad I did not see the email until after the contest, thanks John.

Thanks to the dedication of the ops the weekend was a success and put VE7RAC on the air. We were reported to be loud in EU and that is very good. We also logged many Canadian calls providing them with bonus points.

Call used VE7RAC

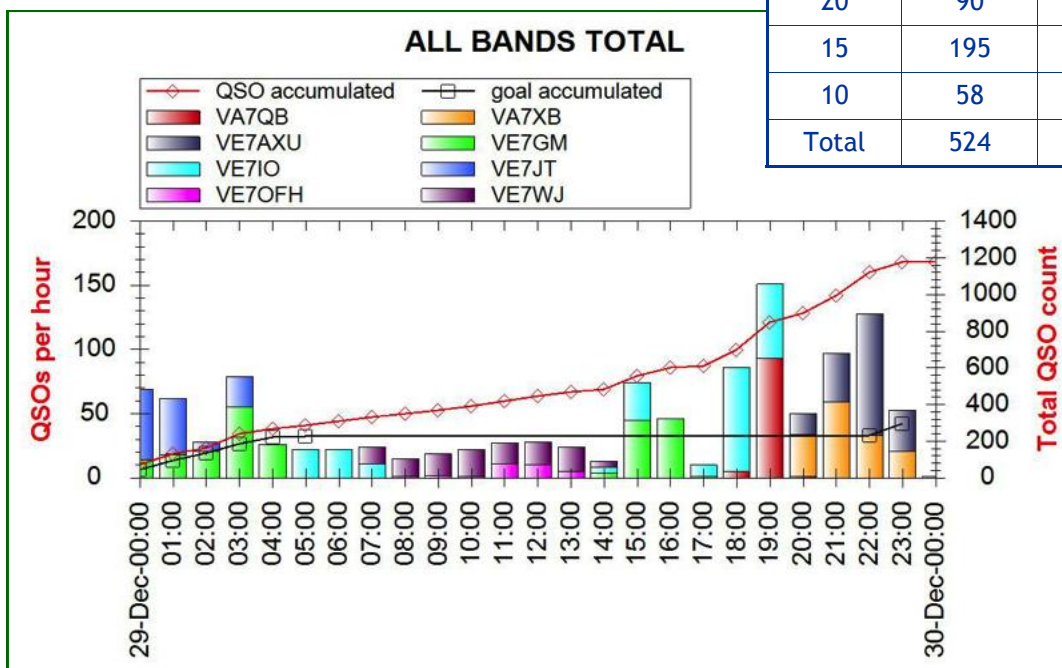
Operator(s): VE7IO, VA7QB, VE7AXU, VE7GM, VE7JT, VE7OFH, VE7WJ
 Station: VE7IO
 Class: M/M HP
 QTH: SURREY
 Operating Time (hrs): 23.19

Summary

Total Q's: 1168
 Total Score: 433,752



Band	CW Qs	Phone Qs	CW Mults	Phone Mults
80	124	123	8	8
40	57	131	6	12
20	90	367	5	12
15	195	0	6	0
10	58	23	6	2
Total	524	644	31	34



Note the black line is the goal line from the previous RAC winter contest the red line is our score this year. A very nice improvement.



Learning Morse Code After Getting My Licence

John MacFarlane VE7AXU

It is clear to me that the use of Morse code is holding its own on the ham bands. Further, I'm meeting hams who have recently become proficient in Morse and are making QSOs on air - something that I have wanted to do for a long time.

In 2004, when I determined to get my ham licence (after thinking about it since 1961) I began learning Morse code. I took the test and passed the Morse test soon afterwards (before I got my call sign). Almost immediately the Morse code requirement was dropped and it has remained as an optional method of achieving HF privileges. I did not use CW on air and soon lost my capability to copy and send.

With encouragement from John Brodie I recently began practicing again - and am now practicing up around 6-8 words per minute. I have been using an excellent free Morse tutor created by a New Zealand ham ZL1AN which I would recommend to any ham thinking of learning morse. The link is

<http://www.qsl.net/zl1an/Software/teach4software.html>

Another learning tool that has been very useful is a website sponsored by AA9PW on which there are a number of options - copy text sent at a range of speeds - which I use to practice copying - and to gradually pick up my speed. The link is <http://aa9pw.com/morsecode/> This is a slick resource which has changing content every day.

There is also a podcast which can be subscribed - to download the "Quote of the Day" at a range of different speeds. This allows me to copy when I have a few free moments - and with an earphone it is very private.

Several times a week I make a Skype connection with Brett Garrett or John Brodie and we each send and receive for about 10 minutes each - just allowing the computer microphone to pick up the sounds from a keyer run by a paddle. This is tougher than working with machine sent code - as humans are not as consistent and methodical - and this really puts me to the test. They are both very patient with me - and I find my speed is picking up. Mostly my confidence is increasing - and I expect to start making local slow speed contacts on-air very soon. Maybe there will be enough interest to start a slow speed contact group?

I find that the practice is keeping my brain agile - forcing me to use brain capacity which has grown idle - and if nothing else it has slowed the effects of aging. I highly recommend learning Morse even if you never plan to use it on air - and take advantage of the free resources on the web to help you along.

Bio Note on John MacFarlane

John started out as an SWL in the early 1960s as WPE3FNC and served as a communications officer in vessels of the Royal Canadian Navy in the late 1960s. In the early 1970s he operated a Government of Canada radio with the call XMJ333 for the National Parks Service of Canada in New Brunswick. John obtained his basic certification in 2005 when he passed the theory and code tests. He obtained his advanced qualification in 2007.

John is a member of the PODX 070 Club, the Feld Hell Club, the European PSK Club and the Delta Amateur Radio Society. Currently he is active on PSK31 on 40m, 20m and 15m but has an interest in Olivia, MFSK, HELL, RTTY and other digital modes. Recently he has become an enthusiastic RTTY & SSB contester. From Mayne Island (IOTA NA-075) he identifies as VA7PX. An objective is to become more active on CW.



SEPAC Report

Kelvin Hall VA7KPH



SEPAC Challenges for 2013

Emergency radio communications for the City of Surrey, Surrey Fire Services is the basic mandate of SEPAC. We need to be well trained and capable of responding to any emergency in an effective and efficient manner.

Training requirements are being modified to meet emergency response requirements. Each SEPAC member is now required to meet a level of training before taking on responsibilities of radio communication duties.

Training in Grab & Go (G&G) kit set-up, radio operations and take down is on the 2013 training list.

There will be Emergency Social Services (ESS) and Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) exercises occurring in 2013 to test the training of SEPAC members and provide an opportunity to work with other City of Surrey emergency response colleagues. These are annual events that will test the skills of all of the emergency responders and their ability to work together.

Interfacing with the public and demonstrating radio communication skills will be accomplished through workshops at community centre events. Most of these events are focused on the younger people and the parents that accompanied them

Two regular events, Canada Day and CN Rail Family Days, will allow SEPAC members to demonstrate their radio communication skills and interface with the public. We usually receive numerous questions about the radios and

their effectiveness in an emergency. People generally leave with the knowledge that there is something out there as a back-up in an emergency.

For 2013 SEPAC will take on more formal training sessions in the use of the radios in the G&G kits and Fire Hall #1 radio room. Training will be provided in Radio Room positions, duties and the interface with the EOC. On-going will be the ICS 100 and 200 courses to assist with the understanding of how SEPAC fits into the greater emergency response role. Formal training will continue throughout the year to enable us to be an effective, efficient and professional part of the City of Surrey's Emergency Program.

We need to remember that we do this training because there is always the real possibility that a major event will occur. It is not a matter of IF a major disaster will occur but WHEN.

Kelvin Hall
SEPAC Coordinator

SEPAC Meetings

Third Thursday of each month starting at 1900 hrs
Fourth Saturday of each month starting at 0900 hrs
Location and event schedule can be found at separ.shutterfly.com – click on the calendar tab

What's Coming Later in 2013

- March - a tutorial on short and "stealth" antennas for the real-estate challenged ham, presented by John White VA7JW
- April - TBA
- May - our annual Foxhunt plus (at the general meeting) preparations for Field Day and how you can do your part to increase our 2013 FD score by another 50%

- June - our AGM and final countdown to Field Day, which is on the weekend of June 22/23

If we can work in a talk sometime during the Spring by Bill Gipps VE7XS on his Lesotho, Africa DXpedition, we will do so.

Also planned is a guided tour of SARC's new repeater installation located on the roof of a 36-story hi-rise -the view is great!.



Amateur Radio Emergency Service

Fred Orsetti VE7IO

Over the past month, minus the Christmas activities, we have gathered some very basic information from the current active ARES groups and begun to record their activities. As Section Emergency Coordinator (SEC) the role is to encourage every emergency communications group to nominate an RAC Emergency Coordinator (EC) and train ARES members.

In BC titles have become a confusing issue as EMBC (PEP) has organized amateur radio in the Province and identified team leaders much the same as RAC has done in the rest of Canada. In many cases people hold two titles one for EMBC and one for RAC and while the titles may be different the roles of each team leader are the same, provide training, provide information, and build an amateur radio communications team.

ARES training focuses on health and welfare traffic and generally requires the operators to be proficient in message handling using the NTS protocol. In most jurisdictions the numbers of volunteer amateur radio operators are small and therefore cross training is standard. To be proficient in handling messages, regardless of the type of message, amateur radio operators must have radio room operation training. To walk into a radio room, turn it on, assign roles and tasks, and interact with the Incident Commander is a top

priority for all amateur radio volunteers. There is a distinct difference between the station manager training level and the radio operator training level and this applies to all radio room operation regardless of the type of traffic being handled. As RAC has a pretty good training program for ARES members it appears that this would be a benefit to all amateur radio emergency communications training.

EMBC has a very good station management course that many have taken over the years hopefully we can make it available to all amateur volunteers in the very near future.

By next month I will try to summarize the multitude of information going around about ARES and the role of amateur radio in some of the recent disasters such as hurricane Sandy. The role of amateur radio in disasters appears to be changing due to new robust commercial systems. Another area of change is the assignment of radio volunteers to other tasks resulting in a shortage of radio operators. Next month we will most likely have more questions than answers.

~ Fred VE7IO
RAC SEC BC

Upcoming Operator Training Opportunities

The next contest to mark on your calendar is the **BC QSO Party** on Saturday, Feb. 2nd between 8 am and 8 pm. This is a home-grown event that has hams all over North America and the world competing to contact BC amateurs. All modes are available (SSB, CW and digital) on HF, so there is something here for everyone. SARC will not be sponsoring an official club event, but is encouraging members to operate from their home stations. However, since many members don't have HF capability, VA7XB's and VE7IO's stations will be available for those who would like to join the fun and get some operating experience in the process. Depending on the response, we will likely focus mainly on SSB for this contest.

Then...the following weekend of Feb. 8-10 is the **CQ Worldwide WPX contest (RTTY)**. This promises to be one of the most exciting contests of the year, with participation from some of the big-gun DX stations in many exotic locations. VA7XB's station will again be available to members who wish to hone their operating skills and make some contacts around the world. As usual, mentoring will be available for those members who are relatively new to RTTY and to contesting in general.

For now, we simply ask that you indicate by return email your interest in: a) the BC QSO party or b) the CQ WW WPX contest. We will follow up with further correspondence, including scheduling, with those who respond.

~ John VA7XB

What is an Elmer to You?

Do you remember your first Elmer? Many of you can, but some of you may not have an Elmer.

Some may ask:

"What is an Elmer?"

"Why have an Elmer if you can do it yourself?"

Others may ask:

"Why can't I have an Elmer?"

"Who would like to be my Elmer?"

Others may comment:

"My Elmer is a Silent Key, I miss him dearly"

"My Elmer is in a Home of some kind, no longer capable of Ham Radio"

I lost track of my Elmer, because... (insert reason... grew up, moved away, got out of radio at one point and lost track, and the list goes on).

"My Elmer and I still enjoy talking to each other"

"I have several Elmers" (The Best Kind in my books, am I allowed to be just a little selfish? [Very big GRIN!])

Whatever your reason or comment is, a Elmer is that blessed person that stops all forward movement, shakes hands with you, brushes aside a spot on the table, whips out the soldering iron or paper, pulls all those neat gadgets out of this drawer that has mysterious capabilities of being endless supplies, and somehow helps us put our ideas and thoughts into working order. WOW!!! -- If that isn't a mouthful.

Well guess what, I was blessed with more than one Elmer. When you are 13 years old, you are a little on the naive side, but your mind wants to play with electronics and make things work.

Let me tell you a little about my Elmers...

I was young, loved playing with electricity. I figured out how to make "Worm Finders", because I enjoyed fishing. I hated digging for worms, and somehow

(can't remember how I learned), I discovered that sending electricity into the ground would cause worms to come to the surface. Presto! Instant bait! No hassle of digging! Best of all.... it used ELECTRICITY!

I shamefully admit that I purchased a Cuss Band, "lessor" known as a CB. It was fascinating to me. I attached it to my 10 speed bike and off I went. I soon became friends with my neighbor up the road by accident. He was an older Gent (to me), but he was interested in Ham Radio Himself. Together we studied. Morse Code was easy for me. . . I was at 20 wpm in nothing flat.

We both took the Novice test, and sadly I flunked. But, I knew why I flunked when I took the test. I learned about "key" words and the tricks used in the questions, and about 6 months later I took it again...passed with flying colors.

Unfortunately, this Gent passed away within a year. Was this guy an Elmer? In my books yes! He started me on the road to success, took me under his wing, walked with me through my studying, helped me learn Morse code, helped me take my first test, and did this under his own free will...the will to help. He may not have been a ham at the time, but he became a ham, the kind of ham I am so very proud to know!

Through this ordeal, I received a novice license, a S-38, and a Eico 720. Within a year, I was riding my Bike and saw this massive antenna. It looked like NASA's dream come true antenna. It towered above the house and high into the sky. It was so big, that Turkeys could roost on it, mistaking it for a huge Elm Tree.

And what did this youngster do? I marched right up to the door, knocked on it, and blurted out: "Are you a Ham?" My real lessons in Ham started that day.

This crazy guy invited me into his house, brought me into a "Man-Cave", sat me down in front of this radio, and started introducing me to these people on the air. After about an hour, he asked me what I wanted to build. I just said the first thing that came to my mind: "An Amplifier". What kind of an Amplifier? My Elmer said! Well heck!!! I didn't know! I just wanted to Amplify SOMETHING, I don't care what it was, I wanted to see something amplified! Not only that, it seems that everything I studied dealt with SOME kind of Amplifier, thus that MUST be an important step!



My Elmer pulled this thing called a breadboard out of a drawer (You know, that drawer that magically has everything...), and together we made a simple Amplifier. Then I got the bright idea of making a transmitter. THAT is only an amplifier with feedback. My Elmer smiled, gave me about 10 components, sent me home, and off I went.

I started using my knowledge, and finally got together this one transistor transmitter/Oscillator. The coils? Hell, I didn't know how many turns! I just "guessed". The Capacitor? Hell, I didn't know how big, I guessed. I sure as heck knew what a tuned circuit was! So I put two and two together, soldered it all up and brought it to my Elmer.

And here comes some more magic out of that Drawer of his, It is called a Grid Dip meter. HE Magically put this thingy-ma-jig on top of it, held it next to my ugly wired mess, and said "It is about 14 megahertz." (Darn, I missed the novice band... by quite a bit) But, when we powered it up, I was able to make MORSE CODE!!! Not only that, the tone of that Morse code was so fantastic, that every bird within hearing distance thought I was calling them in to reproduce!

About a year later, and a REAL Homemade Crystal controlled transmitter later, this Elmer passed away. In comes my third Elmer. This guy pulls me aside, teaches me about antennas, coils, and things that are beyond my imagination. We had the most wonderful relationship for many decades. I grew up helping him with Computers, towers, antenna's, and fixing his radio's. I grew up enjoying a wonderful day each week with him and his family. I also grew up weeping his loss as I went to his wife's funeral... later weeping the loss of him.

But the most important thing of all, is that each of these special Elmer's brought me one step closer to what Ham radio is all about. They brought me one step closer with a helping hand. They brought me one step closer with a smile on their faces. They backed me up, watched me make errors, corrected my mistakes, and supported me in my wonderful journey throughout the years.

And now, I can happily repay back my Elmer's by being an Elmer to other newcomers. As I repay my debt, I realize the emotional joy that my Elmer's had when they saw me growing up and making mistakes as I learned. I can laugh inside, as I see the same mistakes I have made in the past, being made again by my student. I can lend the helping hand and knowledge to make my student understand why that Knight t-150 has a 3 prong plug on it, instead of a 2 prong plug that can accidentally be flipped

around, making that chassis a hot 120 volts to touch. (I had to add this for us old timers who, probably more than once, been zinged with 120 volts for not replacing that cord like we should have done, with a three prong ground cord).

For those who "do not have" an Elmer, Try asking for one... You only have to walk up to a Ham and ask for help, the handshake is only seconds away.

For those who "have" one, you are blessed. You are blessed with help, a patient person, a wonderful friend, and a lifelong experience.

For those who "had" one, the memories will always be cherished in our minds. We can enjoy the memories, pass them down to our students or friends in Ham radio, and be thankful that there are people out there that step up to the plate without question, and stand beside us as we learn what ham radio is all about.

For those who do not have an specific Elmer, or want one? You are probably like me. My main Elmer's have passed away, but I have met some may wonderful hams that I can call Elmer's. I personally do not want to single out just one. Singling out just one would insult all the others, because each and every one of them are a true blessing to me. One will help with transmitters, the other receivers, the other antenna's, the other computer, the left over Elmer's fill in all the other gaps that I can't think of while writing this article.

This is what being an Elmer is all about in my books, how about yours?

- Dwayne KA0AAM





QRM ...from the Editor's shack

Do you have a photo or bit of club news to share?
Something to sell or something you are looking for?
Email it to ve7ti@separs.net for inclusion in this column.

SARC President John Brodie
congratulates Elizabeth
Gilchrist on her recent Basic
course pass with honours.



John's Antenna Is Up

On these pages over the past few months you've witnessed the dig, the pour, the tower mount and now, just in time for the BC QSO Party, John Brodie VA7XB recently erected his Stepp-IR beam, with a little help from his friends. The full write-up is on page 18 but here are the photos...

[Left] The fully-assembled beam on the ground ready for the erection crew

[Lower Left] VE7AXU, John VA7XB, Brett VE7GM and Kelvin VA7KPH ready for the "erection"

[Below] Checking the SWR

[Front Cover] Success!





Page 13—News You Can Lose

The Lighter Side of Amateur Radio

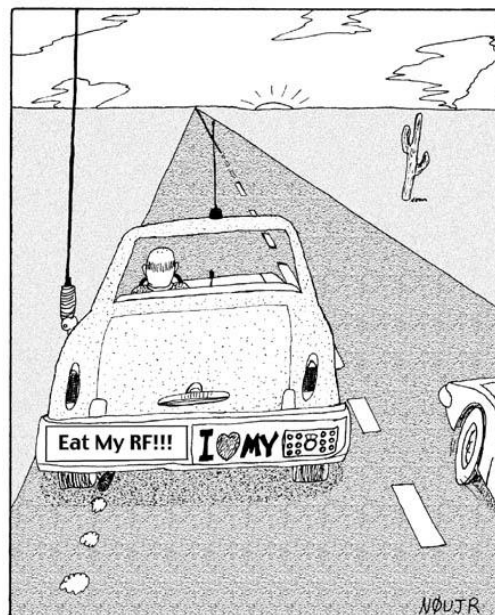
Ham Radio and CW in the Movies

Though not a Ham himself, producer Steven Spielberg has used amateur radio or Morse code in three of his last four movies:

Super 8 (2011), The Adventures of Tin Tin (2011) and, as we featured in the last Communicator, Lincoln (2012).

Spielberg got advice from radio amateurs, some of whom were employed as extras.

See http://www.cqdx.ru/ham/ham_radio/morse-code-plays-role-in-new-spielberg-movie



QCWA members with an attitude...



Beethoven in Morse?

Follow the link to listen to Beethoven's Fifth Symphony performed in Morse code.

Perhaps not the truest rendition ever, but done in interesting fashion including graphical representations of the letters in CW.

<http://www.dxzone.com/cgi-bin/dir/jump2.cgi?ID=16401>

CQ... CQ... CQ

Bill Little VA7ZBL is asking for help over the winter as a CW wannabee. He is looking for a paddle at reasonable cost.

If you have or know of one that is available at a fair price, please contact Bill via mojocrew@telus.net

For Sale

I have a Uniden Bearcat 296D handheld scanner that is collecting dust. The scanner works perfectly and I still have the manuals and cables. I'd be happy to sell it for \$50 or best offer, as it's not serving me anymore (originally paid many hundreds of dollars).

Sean.Hardiman@me.com

Wanted

Rob VE7CZV still needs an auto-tuner for his HF rig, specifically for 80m.

If you have or know of one that is available at a good price, please contact Rob via robgil@telus.net

Attracting Newcomers to Ham Radio



Dom MOBLF of Camb-Hams and the Cambridge University Wireless Society (CUWS) in the United Kingdom suggests a few ways to attract newcomers to Amateur Radio.

The only major recruiting event we have is the Cambridge University Wireless Society's [CUWS] presence at the annual Fresher's Fair in the University each September.

Typically, this gives us around 40-50 students signing-up, of which maybe 2 or 3 three will actually go on to be interested enough to take the Foundation and Intermediate exams. (We normally encourage students to do both exams at the same time, as the Foundation is almost insultingly easy for a Cambridge University physics undergrad!) Most years there's also one student who joins the university already holding an Advanced license they obtained at school, but typically they haven't been QRV recently due to time and financial limitations.

Despite these low numbers, it's not unusual for us to put 20 people through Foundation + Intermediate exams per year, plus maybe 6 Advanced candidates. The majority of these come to us via word-of-mouth or ad-hoc contact from people who've heard about Amateur radio elsewhere, and a handful may be referred via the RSGB DRM. Not all of them are students, as the CUWS act as the local exam centre regardless of the candidate's background. This is principally a matter of practicality: unlike other local clubs, as a registered University society, we can rent University rooms for free, and our shack is available for the Practicals 24 hours a day, so other local clubs will refer interested people to CUWS.

We don't typically run courses. Of course, we run the Foundation + Intermediate practical sessions as-and-when they are required but for the theory exam we have a stock of the RSGB course books that we lend to candidates, supplemented by a set of Powerpoint slides we have developed. We find that motivated candidates (even if they aren't University students) manage perfectly well with this self-study. We're happy to share the Powerpoints if they would interest you / other tutors. For the Intermediate practical, we find that Maplin oscillator kits normally fulfill the role adequately.

When the candidate is ready for the exam (normally as soon as they have nearly completed the practical elements), we arrange the written paper for two weeks' time, even if there is only one candidate. We'd prefer to keep them while they are motivated than to have them waiting a few weeks, during which they might get other interests, or an increased workload from the University.

Reaching out further into the community, one recent initiative is to lend the Cambridgeshire Repeater Group's van Flossie to the local not-for-profit community broadcast station, **Cambridge 105**. This is used as an outside broadcast unit when the radio station gets involved in charitable events. For example, for Children In Need last week, Flossie toured four different parts of the city with live music acts outside the van 'busking' for the charity live on-air.

The OB engineers for these events consist of myself, MOVFC and M0LCM. As we're using the van with all its amateur rigs in it as well as the broadcast equipment, we get a lot of opportunity to talk about amateur radio. So far, through this link, one of the station's DJs has got an intermediate licence, with another promising to do a course, and the licensed DJ's primary-school-aged children are also very enthusiastic.

We also find that the Cambridge 105 brand gets us into schools easier, and for example, last month we had a number of children building crystal sets. We didn't push amateur radio with them, but they've had some exposure, so hopefully it has planted a seed. Time will tell. (As an aside, there are interesting technical challenges for us working with broadcast radio, too... it turns out that amateur 6m colinears work very well on a 52MHz Band I backhaul frequency!) Most cities now have volunteer-run community radio stations, so I'd have thought that other groups could emulate this.

Camb-Hams

<http://www.camb-hams.com/>

<https://www.facebook.com/CambHams>

Cambridge University Wireless Society (CUWS)

<http://www.g6uw.org/>

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/192212924146430/>

‘Net’ Working: Internet Resources For Hams

Need Java? ...no, not coffee

There has been a lot of media of late surrounding Java as a virus magnet. So much so that the US Bureau of Homeland Security has taken the unprecedented step of recommending un-installing it. The best article I’ve seen describing what ails Java and its installation schemes is at URL:

http://www.zdnet.com/a-close-look-at-how-oracle-installs-deceptive-software-with-java-updates-7000010038/?s_cid=e539

I’ve been spoiled lately by using multiple monitors connected to my PC. One screen has my logging software, the other my radio control software. No more squinting or flipping through tabs to find the window I need to view.

Would you like to have an additional monitor connected to your PC but don’t have a spare video out port? Using USB to VGA/DVI adapters can add up to 6 monitors per PC at a cost of less than \$35 each. Check [eBay](#) and other on-line suppliers.



investigate the air in the room. They found evidence of boiler combustion gases spilling into the room, which raised the room temperature, introduced water vapour and other products of combustion. It is believed that the corrosion has caused intermodulation.

To remedy the situation, they did their best to clean all connections and prevent further corrosion from causing interference. We believe the interference has now stopped. However, the problem may re-occur until the airflow is corrected and the combustion gases no longer enter the room. As a short-term measure today, the exterior door to the boiler room will be temporarily jammed open to allow outside air to enter and reverse the negative draft.

The SARC repeaters are keyed by sending a 110.9 Hz sub-audible tone (CTCSS tone) when you depress PTT. The repeater also transmits a tone so that you can use Tone Squelch (“tone decode” on some radios) to open your receiver only when the repeater is active. It is believed that the transmitted tone, being fed back into the receiver while the interference is present, keeps the repeater keyed (open) indefinitely. To avoid this problem the transmitted tone (outgoing tone) has been changed to 100.0 Hz.

If you are not using Tone Squelch or Tone Decode, you do not need to do anything.

If you are using Tone Squelch, then you will not hear any transmissions while your radio is set to decode 110.9 Hz. You have two choices: you can either turn Tone Squelch off, or, if your radio can set tone encode and tone decode to different frequencies, then keep your encode tone at 110.7 Hz and change your decode tone to 100.0 Hz.

Despite our technical challenges, the SARC repeaters are fully operational and we encourage you to make full use of this Club facility. Please be assured that we are pursuing permanent remedies with Surrey Fire Services, from whom we are given authority to use the repeater site.

We have succeeded in making our case to the building management for permanent improvements to the ventilation at the repeater site and have a temporary fix now in place. Stay tuned for further details.

Repeater Interference

As many of you are aware, there has been some interference on the SARC repeater system recently and we have been working diligently on finding the source of the interference and eliminating it.

The interference is a continuous noise burst that starts after a legitimate call and continues for some time thereafter. When a call is made, it overrides the interference and therefore does not interrupt any traffic.

Steve Coleman VE7MAN and Dave Cameron VE7LTD have spent considerable time investigating the problem and attempting to eliminate the interference. The repeaters are installed in a room shared with the building’s boilers, heating and ventilation systems. They found signs of corrosion on some equipment, which led them to

Mark Your Calendars: First Saturday in February

British Columbia QSO Party 2013

1600z February 2 to 0400z February 3

Objectives:

Stations outside British Columbia, make as many contacts as you can with VE7/VA7 stations.

British Columbia stations, make as many contacts as you can with other stations in the province as well as the rest of Canada, into the United States and beyond.

- ✓ Original-photo certificates and Orca-themed keepsakes for top scores in all classes, BC and outside BC.
- ✓ The BCQP is fully supported by N1MM contest logging software and CQ/X GPS-enabled software for mobile contesting.
- ✓ Go to <http://orcadxcc.org/bcqp.html> for rules, tools and updates.

Questions?

Email the contest coordinator, Rebecca VA7BEC at va7bec@rac.ca OR bcqp@orcadxcc.org

**Join Orca DXCC in BCQP 2013.
We'll have ANOTHER whale of a good time!**



The SARC Calendar ...places to be in Surrey for Amateur Radio in the month ahead

February 2013						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	28	29	30	31	1 Weekly SARC Breakfast 8:00 ABC Restaurant 74th & King George Blvd.	2 CONTEST: BC QSO Party
3	4	5 SEPAR NET 7:30 SARC NET 8:00	6	7	8 Weekly SARC Breakfast 8:00	9 CONTEST: CQ WW WPX (RTTY)
10 CONTEST: CQ WW WPX (RTTY)	11	12 SEPAR NET 7:30 SARC NET 8:00	13 SARC Monthly Meeting	14	15 Weekly SARC Breakfast 8:00	16 CONTEST: ARRL DX (CW)
17 CONTEST: ARRL DX (CW)	18	19 SEPAR NET 7:30 SARC NET 8:00	20	21	22 Weekly SARC Breakfast 8:00	23 CONTEST: NA QSO Party (RTTY)
24 CONTEST: NA QSO Party (RTTY)	25	26 SEPAR NET 7:30 SARC NET 8:00	27 SARC Exec Meeting	28	1	2

For details on all SARC events, go to
ve7sar.net

For details on all SEPARS events, go to
separ.shutterfly.com/calendar

Contest Details: <http://hornucopia.com/contestcal/contestcal.html>



QRT John Brodie VA7XB

Having nothing particularly “inspirational” to relate this month, I thought I would simply tell you about the final phase of my tower/beam installation.

In earlier Communicators I described the job of digging the hole, pouring the concrete and erecting the tower with willing assistance of a few members. The tower has remained dormant since late August but I have slowly been raising it a few feet each month in order to “acclimatize” the neighbours. My intention was eventually to put a beam with rotator on top to supplement the SteppIR vertical that I have used successfully for about 5 years.

Now that I have been in the new QTH for exactly a year, it seemed a fitting anniversary celebration to put the “icing on the cake”, so to speak. I do have a never-used Hy-Gain TH7 in my possession, purchased about 10 years ago at the same time as the tower. The TH7 has limitations - it uses traps to adapt the elements to 10, 15 and 20 m but the SWR is minimum at only one frequency within each band and it does not tune the WARC bands (12 and 17 m). Since this equipment is to last me well into retirement years - and maybe forever - I decided that I would go all out and put up a more versatile antenna, one that tunes all bands between 40 m and 6 m (including the WARC bands of 12, 17 and 30 m) and can resonate on all frequencies within these bands.

There is only one antenna that does all that, the only question being what model of SteppIR beam would be suitable. Space considerations were also a factor as my tower is, unavoidably, only 20 ft. from the property boundary and therefore the turning radius of the beam is critical. After several weeks of deliberation, I decided on the 3-element SteppIR with the 30/40 add-on. This beam is small enough that the element tips will not hang over my neighbour’s lot and, having only 3 elements instead of 7, it is considerably lighter than the TH7. The SteppIR beam is more versatile too, having a reversing feature that enables you to electrically exchange the reflector and director and have the beam effectively reversed 180 degrees in seconds with the push of a button.

How does the SteppIR work this magic? SteppIR antennas are unique in that they have tunable elements. A beryllium copper tape runs inside each fiberglass element, driven by a stepper motor at the centre. The motor is controlled by a controller inside the shack and allows precise control of length, thus resonant frequency. This model also has a “trombone” section that will accommodate a 40 m radiating element by effectively bending the driven element to double the length. On that band the reflector and director are not active therefore the gain and front-to-back ratios are less impressive. Otherwise, on 20m the forward gain is specified to be 7.4 dBi and front-to-back ratio is 25dB. Let me remind the newbies that a 10dB

gain is equivalent to a power factor of 10x and 20dB is equivalent to a power factor of 100x. So this represents impressive performance.

The SteppIR beam comes in a small box and requires assembly, which is a several-day process requiring great care to ensure that the final product will be leak-free, that the tape will slide smoothly in and out of the elements and the electrical connections are correct. Once constructed, the beam is easily tuned from the shack by pushing a button, one for each band. Fine-tuning of the frequency is also possible within each band. Options that I purchased for the controller allow the radio’s CAT control to tune the beam to the operating frequency without operator intervention. That part has not yet been connected while I get used to manual band changes and general behavior of the antenna. I measured the SWR at less than 1.5:1 on all bands except 30 m and 6 m, which were 2.4 and 2.1 respectively. Though higher than desirable, the swrs above 2.0 are easily handled by the rig’s internal tuner.

Once I get my hands on a more sophisticated antenna analyzer I intend to plot SWR across the band and record the results permanently so that any changes (signaling problems) can be monitored. My sincere thanks to Kelvin VA7KPH, John VE7AXU and Brett VE7GM for their able assistance and constructive suggestions during erection of the antenna. Total time to erect was 1.5 hours. *[See page 12 for the photos]*

SARC and SEPARS Plan Fund Raising Activity

In order to raise funds to pay for some needed equipment, SARC and SEPARS plan to join together and hold a meat sale. This would be done in conjunction with a reputable vendor of frozen food products of which the undersigned has personal experience. Having done meat sales for other organizations, I can verify that the process is simple, well organized and provides high quality fresh fish, chicken and meat professionally packaged, labeled and frozen for your family’s personal use. Prices are competitive with what you would pay elsewhere, yet the potential for profit is attractive, considering the modest effort required on our part. What will the hoped-for profit be used for? Two things - roofing filters for the TS480 radios in the Grab & Go Kits (to reduce adjacent signal interference during busy band conditions), and lightning surge arrestors for our antenna patch panel. Both will enhance the functionality of the radios and have been recommended for use at training events including Field Day. Our goal would be to raise \$500.

If you are willing to step up and help organize this event on behalf of SARC and SEPARS, please let us know by sending an email to ve7sar@rac.ca. You can count on any necessary assistance from me.